

**CHARLES LAMB
AND THE LLOYDS**

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Charles Lamb and the Lloyds by E. V. Lucas

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E. V. LUCAS

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WITH PORTRAITS

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PREFACE

THIS book grew from the discovery, in 1894, of two masses of correspondence relating to the family of Charles Lloyd (1748-1828), the Quaker philanthropist and banker of Birmingham. The papers, which are very numerous, contain upwards of twenty new letters of Charles Lamb, some of them worthy to rank with his best, and others, also hitherto unpublished, of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Thomas Manning, Robert Southey, Thomas Clarkson, Anna Seward, Catherine Hutton, Priscilla Lloyd (1781-1815), who married Christopher Wordsworth, Charles Lloyd the poet (1775-1839), Robert Lloyd his brother (1778-1811), and Mr. Lloyd himself. With the aid of these letters, and information contained in volumes bearing upon the

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period, it has been possible to tell, at any rate in outline, the story of a notable family.

The Lloyds with whom we have intercourse in these documents, though they were not of remarkable intellectual achievement, possessed very fully that gift of interest for which so many Quakers have been conspicuous. All, in one way or another, were interesting. Mr. Lloyd, the father, had much of Mr. Gladstone's mental vigour and variousness. Publicly he was concerned in large schemes of benevolence; in private he played the scholar to such purpose as to draw praise from that very honest critic, Charles Lamb. Mr. Lloyd's eldest son, Charles, also interested Lamb, lived for a while with Coleridge, and later in life was the friend of 'Christopher North,' De Quincey, and Macready; while Robert Lloyd, another son, completely won Lamb's sympathies and engaged him in a correspondence which leaves literature the richer.

Whether any more Lamb letters are forthcoming is a question for the future to answer.

The fact that those printed in this volume lay hidden for more than eighty years is indication enough that others still may exist, awaiting the moment appointed by fate for their discovery. In Canon Ainger's edition of Lamb's 'Letters,' for example, Elia's epistolary activity in 1798 is represented by but eight letters, and in 1799 by the same number; whereas it is reasonable to assume that in those years he wrote to one friend or another at least once a week. It should be added that in the twenty-three new letters of Lamb which follow occasional modifications of punctuation have been made.

The three Coleridge letters were written while Charles Lloyd was domesticated with Coleridge as pupil in 1796. They belong to a period when the philosopher was casting about for some definite plan of campaign, and help sensibly towards completing our portrait of that noticeable man. Later, in correspondence passing between the Lloyds, are certain acute observations on the great mind.

Among the books which have been found

most useful in corroborating and fortifying the information contained in these papers must be mentioned Canon Ainger's edition of Lamb's 'Letters,' Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge's edition of Coleridge's 'Letters,' the late Mr. Dykes Campbell's edition of Coleridge's 'Poems,' De Quincey's 'Autobiography,' the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' Mrs. Sandford's 'Thomas Poole and His Friends,' and the late Bishop Charles Wordsworth's 'Annals of My Early Life.'

At the time of the discovery of the MSS. a description of a portion of them was printed in the 'Birmingham Daily Post' (for February 4, 1895); a few weeks later an account of certain others was contributed to the 'Athenæum' (for March 2, 1895) by Dr. James Gow; and two articles telling the story of the friendship of Charles Lamb and Robert Lloyd, and giving certain extracts from their letters, appeared in the 'Cornhill' and in 'Lippincott's' for May and June of the present year. But the docu-

ments that follow are now for the first time made public in their entirety.

The Coleridge letters are here printed by arrangement with the poet's grandson, Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, and other letters by permission of Canon Manning, Mr. Gordon Wordsworth, and other representatives of the writers. For the portraits of Charles Lloyd and Sophia Lloyd, now for the first time reproduced, I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. C. A. Lloyd. They were painted by Constable, who visited Birmingham as the guest of James Lloyd, another son of Bingley Hall, early in the century. Thanks are also due, for information and help, to Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Steeds, Mr. Henry Crewdson, and Mr. Charles Linnell; and, for his kindness in reading the proofs and advising thereon, to Mr. W. P. Ker.

E. V. L.

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